

## **FWP FY2014/15**

### **FWP Goals and Objectives**

#### **Director's Office**

The Director's Office is responsible for overall department direction regarding policy, planning, program development, guidelines, and decision-making for key resource activities. Legal services, human resources management, land administration, and information technology support are also administered here. The governor-appointed Commission provides policy direction on resource management, seasons, and use of department lands.

#### **Goal: Agency Management**

*The Director's Office will manage and support FWP programs in an effective manner.*

##### **Objectives:**

- Recruit and retain a staff of highly qualified, trained and motivated professionals through appropriate levels of pay, improved training, and enhanced competency.
- Continue to engage the Tribal governments of Montana in fish, wildlife and park programs.
- Review and assess office space configuration and needs.
- Address major maintenance at FWP administrative buildings.
- Ensure all workload issues for FWP are addressed timely and professionally.
- Increase energy efficiency of FWP operations and buildings.
- Ensure the financial and programmatic health of the department.
- Strengthen management systems and policies.
- Review landholdings to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.

#### **Finance Division**

The Finance Division is a support branch of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. The primary focus of effort includes accounting, fiscal management, purchasing, property management, federal aid administration, and the licensing of all hunters, anglers, and recreation users.

#### **Goal: Financial Management**

*The Finance Division will ensure a sound financial foundation for the agency.*

##### **Objectives:**

- Increase fiscal accountability of agency programs.
- Prioritize funding availability for training and pay to recruit and retain qualified, motivated staff.

- Develop efforts to increase revenues through the sale of all available licenses and by securing additional revenue streams.
- Increase efficiency and accountability of license issuing processes.

### **Fish and Wildlife Division**

The Fish and Wildlife Division is responsible for the stewardship of Montana's fish and wildlife resources while contributing to the quality of life for present and future generations. The operational programs are in five bureaus (Communication and Education, Fisheries, Law Enforcement, Strategic Planning and Data Services, and Wildlife) and seven regions. Primary functions of the Division include collection and analysis of fish and wildlife data, establishing and enforcing hunting, trapping and fishing regulations, habitat conservation and management and communication with the public to maintain sound fish and wildlife populations and the opportunity to enjoy them.

#### **Goal: Habitats**

*The Fish and Wildlife Division will identify priority habitats, including large or threatened landscapes, and work to secure additional funding for their conservation.*

##### **Objectives:**

- Focus efforts on Sagebrush-Steppe habitat to preclude ESA listing of sage grouse.
- Continue to promote access and protect habitat through fee simple acquisition and easements.
- Maintain emphasis on aquatic habitat restoration.
- Work with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and others to correct dam-related habitat issues (e.g., fish passage, thermal pollution) in the lower Missouri and Yellowstone rivers to benefit Pallid sturgeon, paddlefish, sauger other native fish populations.
- Continue to refine information and technology used to prioritize habitats.
- Maintain Division properties (WMAs and FASSs) to meet the intent of the Good Neighbor Policy.

#### **Goal: Species of Concern**

*The Fish and Wildlife Division will emphasize priority species, including those affected by the endangered Species Act and develop new plans or implement existing plans or conservation strategies*

##### **Objectives:**

- Develop a Statewide Management Plan for Bison.
- Update the black bear and mountain lion management plans to reflect knowledge gained in recently completed long-term research projects.

- Implement commitments in deer, elk, bighorn sheep, black and grizzly bears, mountain lion, wolf, sage grouse, prairie dog, upland game bird, and black-footed ferret management plans and conservation strategies.
- Continue habitat efforts to keep sage grouse and Arctic grayling off the Endangered Species Act list and continue efforts for delisting of grizzly bears, bull trout and pallid sturgeon.
- Better integration of game and nongame programs to manage more comprehensively per the Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy.
- Fully engage ESA activities including but not limited to evaluating and addressing threats that could lead to listing, participating in ESA processes to demonstrate that species are being adequately managed or are recovered and participating in legal challenges to important ESA issues such as wolf and grizzly bear delisting.
- Collect data on status and distribution of priority species that have been identified as species of concern, especially if little data about that species is currently available.

### **Goal: Recruitment and Retention**

*The Fish and Wildlife Division will focus efforts on communications, education, and regulatory options to keep existing participants and introduce new users to hunting, trapping, fishing, and wildlife observation.*

#### **Objectives:**

- Evaluate the use of technology and social media as recruitment and retention tools.
- Develop a better understanding of our core constituency to facilitate continued participation in hunting and fishing.
- Identify and address barriers to recruitment and retention of hunters, anglers and wildlife watchers.

### **Goal: Fish and Wildlife Regulation Compliance**

*Regulation compliance must remain an essential component of fish and wildlife management.*

#### **Objectives:**

- Provide support to the Attorney General's office for the prosecution of the backlog of cases resulting from long-term investigations.
- Continue working toward practical regulation simplification for ease of understanding and compliance by anglers, hunters and trappers.
- Regulation compliance that focuses on improving landowner relations and population protection by responding to landowner issues in a timely fashion.
- Clarify and improve regulations for disabled hunters and permission to hunt from a vehicle.

### **Goal: Long Range Planning**

*The Fish and Wildlife Division will develop and implement plans to manage, conserve and protection Montana fish and wildlife populations.*

Objectives:

- Review and consolidate division-wide planning efforts for consistency.
- Remain engaged in the implementation of disease risk mitigation strategies (e.g., brucellosis and chronic wasting disease), with immediate emphasis on minimizing risk of disease transmission between livestock and wildlife in the Madison, Gallatin, and Yellowstone valleys.
- Initiate a process to develop a statewide Fisheries Management Plan.
- Maintain and enhance the infrastructure of our Fish Hatchery System. Emphasize development of more cost effective water and power sources at Fort Peck Hatchery.

**Goal: Public Awareness and Involvement**

*The Fish and Wildlife Division will focus on programs to increase public awareness of FWP activities, understanding of FWP issues, and support for FWP efforts.*

Objectives:

- Support a continuing information/education program with the goal of raising the awareness of and minimizing impacts from aquatic invasive species and other threats and opportunities.
- Maintain and enhance expertise in human-wildlife conflict issues and address the increasing issue of bear/recreationist encounters.
- Increase efforts to develop support from nonconsumptive constituents who also benefit from diverse and sustainable fish and wildlife populations in Montana.

**Goals: Data Assessment**

*The Fish and Wildlife Division will define the role of all data collection and analysis efforts for use in internal planning and operations, as well as external use to provide the public with fish and wildlife information to make informed land use and energy development decisions.*

Objectives:

- Evaluate and monitor natural resource damage events such as the Yellowstone oil spill. Fully engage efforts to develop a GIS-based western wide habitat assessment tool available to the general public.
- Complete an environmental review process for division comments on land use proposals including residential development, energy development, transportation development, and climate change and assess strategies for the evaluation and mitigation of the fragmentation caused by various land use activities.
- Continue to refine harvest management programs to make clear and explicit links between population monitoring parameters, population objectives, social expectations, and hunting/fishing season recommendations.

- Complete Fisheries Information System database, which will include survey and inventory data, hatchery fish plants, angler pressure data, and fishing regulations.

### **Goal: Access**

*The Fish and Wildlife Division will provide more incentives to landowners to provide access to private lands and improve opportunities to access public lands.*

#### **Objectives:**

- Complete a comprehensive hunter and angler access plan.
- Work with constituent groups to develop a suite of options to encourage access to private lands.
- Enhance efforts to provide access to landlocked public lands.
- Maintain or increase emphasis on providing public angler access, via FAS and other programs.
- Enhance efforts to mark boundaries of state lands.

## **Parks Division**

The Parks Division is responsible for conserving the scenic, historic, archaeological, scientific, and recreational resources of the state and providing for their use and enjoyment. The Division manages state parks and administers recreation programs for the benefit of citizens of Montanans and their guests for current and future generations.

### **Goal: Service**

*The Parks Division will provide high quality services to State Park visitors and recreationists, provide the strong and efficient program leadership to local Montana communities and agencies via education and grants programs, and provide camping, interpretive and other recreational opportunities across Montana.*

#### **State Parks Objectives:**

- Improve communication with park visitors relating to infrastructure improvements, interpretive programs, historic resource management, and customer involvement overall through use of the Internet and direct interaction with community leaders, non-profits, and citizens.
- Finalize planning efforts for the management and development of Fish Creek State Park in Mineral County.
- Work with other agencies to support integrated approaches to meeting the mission of the park system, division and adjacent communities.
- Continue to refine the campsite and other facility reservation program that was implemented in 2011 to ease use, improve fiscal accountability, and increase revenue generation.

### **Recreation Program Objectives:**

- Provide high-quality customer service to all grant sponsors. Insure clear, professional, and proactive communications occur from staff..
- Evaluate reorganizing advisory committees to expand their use in helping to improve grants, recreation opportunity and safety statewide. Refine the grant programs administered by Montana State Parks for ease of use by the public. This includes the ongoing implementation of an on-line grants program.
- Work with nonprofits as well as local and federal agency partners to improve recreation management collaboratively through better communication and coordination.

### **Goal: Stewardship**

*The Parks Division will promote stewardship of natural, cultural, paleontological and recreational resources for current and future generations.*

### **State Parks Objectives:**

- Complete development on the first phase of the Milltown site as a day-use state park east of Missoula.
- Update and improve state park regulations and policies pertinent to the protection of park resources, public safety and use.
- Promote sustainable and energy efficient design, construction, and maintenance of facilities, equipment, and operations.
- Aggressively apply best practices for control of aquatic and terrestrial noxious weed species.
- Identify and address any open water right issues that may exist at individual park sites statewide to secure interests of the public appropriately.
- Improve heritage and paleontological resources management through continued support, policy development, training and research on sites throughout the state park system.
- Work to achieve National Historic Landmark status for at least one state park.
- Incorporate resource protection and stewardship messages into field operations as well as education, outreach, and interpretive programs.
- Work with Indian tribes and others to repatriate remains and other sacred items to lands under division management.

### **Recreation Program Objectives:**

- Insure that the processes and procedures for effectively administering the various grant programs are continually reviewed and improved.
- Continue to reduce complexity and other barriers to administering funds to the extent lawful and practical by listening to users and amending practices as appropriate.
- Update the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).
- Provide advice and planning support to communities, tribes, agencies and not-for profits in providing recreation opportunities throughout Montana.

**Goal: Sustainability**

*The Parks Division will strive to enhance the long-term sustainability of the State Park System and maintain recreation opportunities in a manner that promotes long term resource conservation fiscally and operationally.*

**State Parks Objectives:**

- Secure long-term funding and staffing to sustain the state parks system's new and existing areas such as Milltown Dam and Chief Plenty Coups State Parks.
- Monitor and maintain all funding sources, especially the vehicle registration funding system to assure consistent funding and also work with county treasurers and others to support communication about the program.
- Continue to examine options and opportunities for all division land holdings that would be more appropriately managed by other public entities.
- Effectively implement the AmeriCorps program as part of integrating parks into communities, increased volunteerism and expanding local significance and special events.
- Integrate a maintenance management system into capital and operations programs management to enhance long term functionality of park infrastructure through improved monitoring and cost management.
- Continue to provide a positive impact to Montana's general economy and tourism-based industries.
- Improve public and community understanding, appreciation and support of state park values, resources, and opportunities.

**Recreation Program Objectives:**

- With authorization from the executive, work with other stakeholders to advocate for and maintain funding for diverse programs such as recreational trails and Land and Water Conservation Fund funding to sustain the program benefits everywhere.
- Work with communities to help reinforce awareness and understanding of recreation to help address health and quality of life issues throughout Montana including small program needs such as ball fields, swimming pools, etc..
- Explore and help build partnerships to expand recreation opportunity and management where supported locally and needed generally.
- Expand the network of recreation volunteers to help inspect trails, support healthy family based recreation and expand support for public land management.

**Goal: Safety**

*The Parks Division will provide for public safety and reduced exposure to liability by improving management practices, critical incident responses, hazard reductions and improving visitor experiences.*

**State Parks Objectives:**

- Enhance and integrate safety and service by continuing to mature the public safety program while providing a preventative enforcement presence and activities.
- Address forestry issues such as diseased or hazard trees statewide, as well as reducing potential fire danger in areas that may threaten adjacent lands.
- Work with the Montana State Fund to investigate workplace accidents and minimize claims as a means of providing a safe workplace and managing risk exposure overall.

**Recreation Program Objectives:**

- Expand utilization of volunteers to help in further promoting safe and ethical use of OHV's and snowmobiles including the use of the OHV safety simulator.
- Enhance safety and ethics training for motorized and non-motorized users to reduce conflict, promote compatibility, and improve resource stewardship using programs such as Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly.
- Integrate and enhance recreation program management with division field staff involvement outside of state park boundaries to help clubs, user groups, counties communities and federal agency partners in administering safe programs.